

**Testimony Regarding the Department of Developmental Disabilities Budget
March 2, 2011
Appropriations Hearing
By Janice Chamberlain, Horizons Programs, Inc., South Windham, CT.**

Senator Toni Harp and Representative Toni Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Janice Chamberlain. I am the Associate Executive Director of Horizons Programs, Inc., a not for profit agency located in the "quiet corner" of Connecticut, employing 120 individuals from the greater Windham County area. Our agency has been in operation for over 30 years and provides individualized supports and services for people with intellectual and developmental challenges through quality residential, recreational, work and educational services.

I appreciate the hard decisions the Appropriations Committee and Legislature will have to make in the next few months as all wrestle with large budget deficits and dwindling revenues. I also feel very fortunate that Governor Malloy's proposed budget, overall, has a limited impact on the not for profit providers and the most vulnerable citizens of this state.

The Governor has shown his continued commitment in the following ways:

- New Funding for 289 FY12 high school graduates and 277 high school graduates in FY13.
- New Funding for new residential (FY12- 83 individuals/FY13 108-individuals) and day services (FY12-90 individuals/FY13-101-individuals) for adolescents aging out of the DCF system.
- Savings through attrition in state operated programs: consolidation of campus settings at Southbury and closure of 5 public group homes.
- Pilot Program and 3 Waivers, related to Autism Services.
- New bonding dollars for non-profit providers.

I am glad to be able to share good news with families who have struggled to keep their children with developmental disabilities at home and in the local school systems at a reduced cost to the taxpayer. Their hard work and dedication will be rewarded through this new funding for their High School graduates who are eager to work and become productive and contributing citizens of our state. Our agency has a large waiting list of parents who are hopeful that Horizons Supported Employment Services will assist their children to find meaningful and productive work. The Governor's budget will help Horizons meet this challenge.

However, all is not totally "rosy" as you all know. The challenges that Horizons and other not for profit agencies face doing business in the state of Connecticut have not gone away. We continue to experience:

- Increases in utilities and fuel costs.
- Increases in Health care costs and Insurance premiums.
- Unfunded mandates both federal and state.
- Rates that have been frozen for several years with no indexing to the annual CPI or other economic measure.

In addition, elimination of the Cost Settlement Process that is being proposed by the DDS would compound our budget concerns and penalize agencies that had implemented sound fiscal practices.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. I am always available to answer questions that you might have. My contact information is listed below.

Janice Chamberlain, Associate Executive Director
Horizons Programs, Inc.
P.O. Box 323
South Windham, CT 06226
860-456-1032, Ext 125